

Prospective Social Studies Teachers' Views on School Environments Outside the Classroom

Özkan Akman

Süleyman Demirel University, Turkey,  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8264-3178>

Abstract: Out-of-class learning activities are educational activities that enable students to have learning experiences outside the classroom, beyond the traditional classroom environment. These activities can help students make learning more effective, develop their interests and increase their skills. The aim of the study is to examine the effect of social studies teacher candidates' out-of-class learning environments on their school achievement. Nineteen pre-service social studies teachers studying at Süleyman Demirel University Faculty of Education participated in the study which was designed based on qualitative research approach. The research data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed through descriptive analysis. According to the results obtained, it was concluded that out-of-class learning environments increase student motivation and achievement as well as help students to control the learning process more and develop independent learning skills. It was suggested that educators can make the best use of this potential by organizing and supporting activities suitable for students' interests and that integrating out-of-class activities with in-class teaching can help students have deeper and more lasting learning experiences.

Keywords: Social Studies, Learning Outside the Classroom.

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Introduction

Education should not be limited to classroom learning activities. School environments outside the classroom are also of great importance to enrich and deepen students' education. Pre-service social studies teachers play an important role in providing such experiences for students (Aksit, 2011). This article aims to examine pre-service social studies teachers' views on out-of-class school environments and their role in education (Algan & Uslu, 2009). Social studies teachers are responsible for providing students with important learning experiences not only in the classroom but also in out-of-class school settings (Çengelci, 2013; Takahashi, 1999). Therefore, examining pre-service social studies teachers' views of out-of-class school settings can help us understand how future teachers evaluate and utilize such experiences (Erdoğan, 2009). Out-of-class school settings offer students the opportunity to have out-of-book experiences and transform learning into practice (Miller, Tichota, & White, 2009; (Tarman, Ergür & Eryıldız, 2012). Such environments give students a chance to put their theoretical

knowledge into practice, experience social interactions and experiment with different learning styles (New Jersey School Outdoor Area Working Group, 2007). In the social studies course, students can experience social issues and historical events in real-world contexts outside the classroom through museum visits, field studies, social service projects, and many other methods (Skinner & Chi, 2012; (Yılmaz & Tepebaş, 2011). Understanding how pre-service social studies teachers approach such out-of-class experiences can influence their professional development and how they teach their future students (Sönmez, 2010).

Out-of-class School Environments and Education

Out-of-class school environments offer students the opportunity to put theoretical knowledge into practice. These environments can enrich students' learning experiences and help them develop a deeper understanding of topics. Social studies teachers can introduce topics such as history, geography, politics, economics, and culture to students in out-of-class settings to encourage them to develop interest and understanding in these areas. Understanding pre-service social studies teachers' views on school environments outside the classroom can help us understand how we can shape the educational process for these teachers. Research shows that pre-service social studies teachers recognize the importance of out-of-class environments in education. They believe that such activities can increase students' motivation, provide real-world experiences, and make social studies topics more engaging.

The aim of the study is to examine in depth the views of pre-service social studies teachers on out-of-class school environments. In line with this purpose, answers to the following sub-headings were sought:

How do you think out-of-class school activities contribute to students' social studies learning?

Which skills do you think out-of-class experiences can provide students with?

How do you associate out-of-class school activities with in-class learning experiences?

Method

This research was prepared using the content analysis technique from qualitative research methods. The study group of the research was carried out with 19 pre-service social studies teachers studying at Süleyman Demirel University Faculty of Education. The data were collected through a structured interview form. The collected data were subjected to content analysis.

Results

According to the results of the study, the majority of pre-service social studies teachers believe that out-of-class school environments play an important role in education. They emphasized that such activities encourage deep learning, increase students' sense of social responsibility, and make the course material more concrete. In

addition, pre-service social studies teachers reported some challenges in organizing and managing out-of-class school environments. Financial constraints, security concerns, and logistical issues can make it difficult to implement such activities.

Conclusion

Examining pre-service social studies teachers' views on out-of-class school environments is an important step in developing educational innovations and effective teaching strategies. These pre-service teachers are aware of the role of out-of-class activities in education and are eager to provide such experiences for their students. However, the challenges they face in organizing and managing such activities should also be taken into consideration. Educational institutions and teacher training programs can provide support to overcome these challenges and make out-of-class school environments more effective.

Understanding the views of pre-service social studies teachers on this issue is an important step towards using out-of-class school environments more effectively to increase students' interest in social studies topics and encourage deeper learning. Such research can provide an important foundation for continuous improvements in education. Examining pre-service social studies teachers' views of school environments outside the classroom can help us understand the impact of these experiences on student learning. Research results can provide important clues about how teacher education programs and classroom teaching practice can integrate such experiences. This type of research can contribute to the effective and student-centered teaching of social studies teachers.

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